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Albania

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I. Methodology and consultation process for the preparation of the report

1. The Report of the Republic of Albania (RA) for the second monitoring cycle of the UPR is prepared in line with the adopted Guidelines provided in the Decision of HRC (A/HRC/DEC/17/119). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs leaded an inter-institutional working group with representatives of governmental and independent institutions. Furthermore, civil society organizations were informed about the drafting of this national Report.

II. Development of normative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights since the first cycle of the UPR

A. Constitutional and legal framework for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms

2. OSCE/ODHIR Report stated that Parliamentary elections held on 23 June 2013, were competitive, with an active participation of voters during the campaign and respecting fundamental freedoms. While the amendments to the Electoral Code in July 2012 improved the general electoral framework by addressing the previous recommendations of OSCE/ODHIR and Venice Commission, thus ensuring a sound base for holding democratic elections.

3. Following the first monitoring cycle of Albania under UPR since 2010, the Albanian institutions have been committed to fulfilling the international obligations, implementing the recommendations of international organizations and institutions, in order to protect human rights and to achieve higher standards. During 2010–2013 the legal and normative framework on the protection of human rights has been enhanced and constantly complemented concerning discrimination, protection of the rights of the child, women's rights, gender equality, domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, protection of persons with disabilities, social assistance, education, health care, justice system, fight against corruption etc.

4. Amendments to the Penal Code during 2012–2013 are in compliance with the obligations deriving from the international Conventions where Albania is a party, with the Law "On Protection from Discrimination" and with the legal practice of Constitutional Court, namely:

- These amendments provide for domestic violence, rape and sexual violence in the marriage, sexual harassment and psychological violence as separate offences and increase punishment for the perpetrators. Likewise, sexual violence including sexual violence with a minor are provided for as separate offences even when the perpetrator is in family relations. The articles related to pornography with the minor, exploitation for prostitution involving even a minor, physical and psychological maltreatment of the minor, trafficking in human beings are amended by adding new elements, increasing the relevant punishments as well as losing parental responsibility.
- Amendments to the Code envisage gender identity and sexual orientation as aggravating circumstances when committing offences and provide for severe punishments for cases of discrimination on the above grounds. Moreover, the

criminal offences on "inciting hatred and conflict" and "denying equality of citizens" were amended by including sexual orientation and gender identity.

- The amendments to the Criminal Code in 2013 envisaged a new article on blood feud providing for a more severe punishment.
- The Penal Code envisages "enforced disappearance" as a criminal offence, providing for cases when the offence is committed against children, pregnant women or individuals unable to protect themselves due to different reasons.

5. Law "On Protection from Discrimination" (approved in February 2010) regulates the implementation and respect for the principle of equality related to gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic condition, educational or social status, pregnancy, parental affiliation and responsibility, age, family or marital status, civil status, residence, health condition, genetic predispositions, disability, membership to a certain group or any other reason by sanctioning the prohibition of discrimination on the above grounds.

6. Law "On the Protection of the Rights of the Child" defines the rights and protection of children including the responsible mechanisms for ensuring the effective protection of these rights. The legal framework in implementing this law reflects the specific measures for the child's protection.

7. During this period numerous laws and bylaws have been amended and adopted, mainly those ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights: Amendments to the laws: "On measures against violence in family relations" (2010); "On occupational health and safety" (2010); "On social assistance and services" (2010, 2011); "On pre-university system in RA" (2012); "On mental health" (2012); "On social housing programs" (2012); "On the organization and functioning of administrative courts and adjudication of administrative disputes" (2012); "On the registration of immovable properties" (2012); "On the protection of personal data" (2012); "On Legal Aid" (2013); "On Foreigners" (2013"; "On audiovisual media in RA" (2013); "On Civil Servant" (adopted in 2013).

8. Furthermore, a series of strategies and action plans have been adopted, reviewed and implemented, namely: "National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender based Violence and Domestic Violence" 2011-2015 and its Action Plan; Action Plan on Children (2012–2015); Cross-Cutting Strategy on Social Protection 2008-2013; National Strategy on People with Disabilities 2005-2015; National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2010-2015; National Action Plan on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings (adopted in 2011); Cross-cutting strategy "Reform in the field of property rights 2013-2020 and its Action Plan"; Action Plan for Nondiscrimination based upon Sexual Orientation 2012-2014 etc.

9. Since the first cycle of the UPR, Albania has signed or/and ratified the following Conventions and protocols:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified in 2012).
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication Procedures (ratified in 2013).
- Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (ratified in November 2012).
- Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ratified in 2009, entered into force 1.07.2010).
- Council of Europe Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (ratified in 2011).

- Third Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (ratified in 2011).

10. The basic principles of our foreign policy outlined in the government program are generally accepted norms of international law, of mutual understanding and of respect among nations, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, good neighborly relations and regional cooperation along with international solidarity. The rule of law and respect for and protection of human rights plays a significant role in the government program, which also determines tangible objectives related to education, health care, gender equality, social treatment and inclusion, the fight against corruption and economic development etc.

B. Institutional framework for the protection of human rights

11. Since 2011 the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD), a public, independent institution was elected from the Assembly, based on the law on Protection from Discrimination. It is the responsible authority "ensuring the effective protection from discrimination and from any form of behavior inciting discrimination".

12. The Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data established in conformity to the law "On Protection of Personal Data" as the independent and supervising authority for the application of rules on personal data processing by all public and private bodies.

13. In 2013 were established the: First Instance Administrative Courts; the Administrative Court of Appeal and the Administrative College of the High Court, in accordance with the law "On the organization and functioning of administrative courts". They sentence administrative disputes and disputes due to illegal interventions or failure to act from public bodies.

14. National Council for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers drafts and coordinates policies for child protection.

15. Since 2011, State Agency for the Protection of the Rights of the Child has been functioning based on the law "On the protection of children", as an executive institution coordinating the work for the protection of the rights of children, responsible for monitoring the application of the legal framework and policies related to children, coordinating with the responsible state bodies as well as imposing sanctions for infringing the law.

16. Since 2012 was established the Mechanism for coordinating the work among the responsible authorities to refer cases of children at risk.

17. At the local government level, the Units for the Rights of the Child (URCH) were established and have been functioning at the regional level (municipality or commune) along with URCH.

18. Based on "The New Cooperation Agreement on its Functioning" (June 2012), the National Referral Mechanism for Victims/Potential Victims of Trafficking (VP/PVT) is responsible for the identification, referral, protection and assistance of the victims of trafficking or potential/ victims along with their re-integration.

19. Since 2011, the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings has been functioning in line with the reviewed agreement of the National Referral Mechanism for VP/PVT, functioning in 24 municipalities so far. While in 2011 was established Mechanism coordinating the work of referring cases of violence in family relations based on the law "On measures against violence in family relations".

20. The amendments to the law "On measures against violence in family relations" resulted in the setup of the National Treating Center for Victims of Domestic Violence, which has been functioning since 2011. It aims at training and rehabilitating women, girls and children subject to domestic violence.

21. In 2013, the State Labor Inspectorate and Social Services was established in order to implement and monitor the legal framework as well as to inspect working places, working conditions, working hours, employment of women, children and people with disabilities both in the private and public sector etc.

22. The State Education Inspectorate (established in 2013) aims at enhancing the quality of educational service in pre-university education and inspecting the application of legal requirements in pre-university and higher education.

23. Public and non-public Institutions as well as daily centers of Social Care under the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth provide services for children, third age people, public and non-public residential for women and girls in need.

24. Furthermore, there are structures within the governmental institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Culture) which address issues related to the promotion and protection of human rights. Their legal framework is constantly improving and complementing.

III. Promotion and protection of human rights since the first cycle of the UPR

25. Since the first UPR review the state and independent institutions have undertaken a series of measures and activities to promote and protect human rights aiming at implementing its recommendations.

26. The permanent Parliamentary Commissions[1] examine and propose for approval the submitted draft acts, draft declarations or draft resolutions, monitor the implementation of laws and control the activity of ministries and other central bodies, by proposing to the Assembly or to the Council of Ministers to take the necessary measures. In addition, they review reports from independent institutions, such as the Ombudsman, Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination, elaborated in the Assembly plenary session.

27. In exercising its constitutional function, the Ombudsman Institution plays a significant and proactive role in promoting and protecting human rights and those of vulnerable groups. To this end, the Institution has addressed and dealt with a number of problems and concrete cases. It has also provided recommendations on the improvement of the legal framework and implementation of related policies.

28. Concerning Roma minority, this Institution has submitted to the relevant institutions a package of recommendations for a long-term solution to the problems related to economic assistance, social housing, registrations in civil status registers, facilitating their education, improving their living conditions etc.

29. As regarding the child protection, the Ombudsman has identified problems and made recommendations for the implementation of the legal framework and policies for children in need, orphans, those at social care residential institutions and for the rights of exploited children for labor or children at risk, etc.

30. The Ombudsman in the role of the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture has regularly inspected institutions of arrest/detention, and prisons and has submitted recommendations for protecting individuals from torture, degrading treatment

and punishment, for the improvement of the penitentiary system and for the treatment of detainees/arrested in police stations.

31. Ombudsman cooperates closely with the civil society (mentioning the signing of 120 cooperation agreements with NGO-s), UN agencies (UNDP Office), EU delegation in Tirana, Council of Europe mechanisms (as ECRI, CPT etc.). It is also a member of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) and of the Regional Network of National Preventive Mechanism against Torture.

32. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) in compliance with the competences envisaged by the law "On the protection from discrimination" assists victims of discrimination by examining complaints or assisting them in court; conducting awareness raising campaigns; monitoring and conducting surveys regarding discrimination; publishing report and submitting recommendations for issues related to discrimination as well as imposing administrative sanctions according to the definition of this law. CPD exercises its competences to accept complaints not only from the public sector, but even from the private sector and individuals. During the reporting period CPD has prioritized its legal competence to conduct administrative investigations upon receiving reliable information for infringements to this law. Thus, *ex-officio* issues initiated by the CPD have significantly increased. In some cases the Commissioner's decisions are based on European Court of Human Rights.

33. CPD cooperates with different international organizations and agencies and with local NGOs on a series of projects in the context of the fight against discrimination (OSCE, UNICEF, SOROS Albania, Albanian Committee of Helsinki and Swiss Cooperation Office in Tirana, etc). Furthermore, a considerable number of activities, conferences and round tables for the protection of vulnerable groups from discrimination have been conducted.

34. Fulfilling the obligations deriving from the Convention on Human Rights periodical reports are submitted and considered by the respective Committees: periodical reports in the framework of International Pact for Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention of the Rights of the Child; Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Common Core Document. It is also submitted the third national Report to the implementation of the CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

35. Albania has submitted its application to be elected as a member of Human Rights Council for the period 2015–2017, committed to provide a unique national perspective in the discussions and advocacy of human rights worldwide.

36. Since EU accession process is a national objective, the Albanian authorities are committed to fulfill the five key priorities identified in the European Commission Progress Report for Albania (October 2013). The relevant institutions are committed to draft and implement a road map to fulfill these priorities, including the protection of human rights, mainly the protection from any form of discrimination, protection of children, justice system, protection of women, domestic violence, and protection of people with disabilities, protection of minorities, particularly Roma.

37. In 2010, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) made its monitoring visit and in 2012 its Report together with the answers from the Albanian authorities was published. In 2011, CPT made an ad hoc visit regarding the demonstrations on 21 January. The answers of the Albanian authorities have not been published since the judicial process has not been concluded yet. Following to these events the former CoE

Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg drafted a special report. In 2013, CoE Commissioner for Human Rights visited Albania and drafted a report published in January 2014, together with an Appendix of comments from the Albanian authorities. The next CPT visit is foreseen to take place in February 2014.

38. In 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in CoE organized a Follow Up Seminar for the implementation of the Framework Convention in the context of the second monitoring cycle. In 2011, the Advisory Committee on the FCNM made an evaluating visit on the situation of minorities in Albania and in 2012 its Opinion was published. Following this opinion the Albanian authorities presented their comments.

39. In 2010 was published the fourth Report of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for Albania. In 2010, ECRI in cooperation with the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination organized in Tirana a round table with the participation of the responsible institutions representatives.

40. "One UN" 2012-2016 Programe has supported the Albanian authorities in drafting the legal framework and cooperation agreements regarding gender equality. Under this Programme the first national Center for victims of domestic violence was set up with the support of UNDP. In the context of the worldwide campaign 16 days of activism against violence, every year the Albanian institutions have conducted awareness raising campaigns with the support of international organizations particularly UN agencies, such as UNWOMEN, UNDP etc. In cooperation with IOM mobility units are established in some municipalities under a pilot program to identify and refer victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking as well as to increase access to services. "Guidelines for the implementation of standard procedures for the identification of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking" is developed with the cooperation of IOM and USAID.

41. Under the reform of social services 2013-2016, the Ministry of Social Welfare is cooperating with UNICEF to draft a system of integrated social services at a decentralized level for addressing issues of children, women and vulnerable groups. Albanian institutions are supported by ILO IPEC in the process of drafting a national roadmap for the elimination of the worst forms of children's labor.

IV. The implementation of the first review cycle recommendations accepted by Albania

42. Since 2010, the Albanian institutions have been committed to implement the recommendations accepted in the first cycle[2].

Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Recommendations 1-7)

43. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by the Albanian Assembly in November 2012. Concerning the Optional Protocol of the Convention, the Albanian authorities are evaluating this recommendation and shall soon consider its signing and ratification.

Harmonization of national legislation with international human rights instruments (Recommendations 8, 9, 10, 14)

44. Referring to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the state has the obligation to implement international law, which prevails on the national one. Any other international

agreement ratified by the Assembly becomes part of the national law and it is directly implemented unless it is self-applicable and its implementation requires the adoption of a new law. As for the implementation of the Conventions on Human Rights, the Albanian authorities are committed to align, adopt and complement the national legal framework in compliance with the international obligations, where Albania is a party.

45. The law "On Protection from Discrimination" is in line with the four EU Directives in the field of non-discrimination and some specific provisions conform to principles, international conventions and provisions related to non-discrimination. Important parts of the *General Policy Recommendation* No 7 on the national legislation against racism and intolerance have been included in this law[3].

46. Law "On the protection of the rights of the child" is in compliance with the UN Convention On the Rights of the Child.

47. In 2013, was drafted a National Action Plan in view of implementing the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, by determining tangible measures and costs for its implementation.

48. The Penal Code has recently included a new Article considering "enforced disappearance" as a the criminal offence in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on the Protection of all Persons against Enforced Disappearance.

The rights of women, gender equality, domestic violence, violence against women (Recommendations 18, 25, 29, 30, 32, 40, 41, 42, 44, 54, 56, 57, 58)

49. One of the priorities of the Albanian government has been the protection of the rights of women and prevention and reduction of gender based and domestic violence. Tangible measures are taken to complement the legal framework; to effectively involve public institutions; to strengthen the role of the justice system in preventing, supporting victims; to integrate them by providing social housing, employment, professional training, social assistance and services; to raise awareness and build capacities through trainings and awareness raising campaigns. Another measure foreseen is the functioning of an online national registration system to monitor cases of domestic violence, along with the functioning of the national line for domestic violence victims.

50. Some tangible measures for the protection of domestic violence victims and potential victims are:

(a) Implementation of the law "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" for the treatment and assistance by responsible structures to complement Protection Orders and Immediate Protection Orders (PO, IPO) for domestic violence victims. During this period there has been an increase in the number of cases treated and requests for Protection Order from the State Police Structures. NGOs providing free legal aid have assisted for the preparation of PO and IPO.

- Issuing of PO and IPO by the Court and their execution.
- Prosecution of offenders breaking PO and IPO conform to the Penal Code thus, the number of persons prosecuted has increased.

(b) Application of the relevant Penal Code provisions on violence against women and domestic violence by the legal bodies.

(c) State Commission for Legal Aid with representatives from the executive, judicial powers and civil society provides free legal aid. To this end free legal advice is also provided by specialized Centers. (NGOs).

51. Amendments to the law "On Measures against Violence in Family Relations" aimed to deal the identified problems during its application in practice by setting up the special responsible structures for the protection, support and rehabilitation of victims, mitigation of consequences and prevention of domestic violence. Thus, the first before mentioned national shelter for victims of domestic violence was set up and the national referral system of victims of domestic violence was established. Even the provision of free legal aid and other facilitations during the judicial process are duly provided. With the Protection Order issued by the Court, the judicial costs are charged to the offender.

52. Law "On Protection from Discrimination" *inter alia* regulates the application and respect for the principle of gender equality and aims at ensuring equality before the law, equal chances and opportunities to exercise the rights and to enjoy the freedoms, to participate in public life, and effective protection from discrimination.

53. In March 2012 and June 2013 numerous amendments to the Penal Code were adopted to prevent acts of violence against women and domestic violence, to provide protection to victims and to impose more severe punishment for the perpetrators inflicting violence against women and domestic violence. Specifically, domestic violence in all its forms is envisaged as a separate offence *(beating or any other form of violence; serious threat to cause death or grave personal harm; intentional injury);* the circle of perpetrators has been widened (spouse, former-spouse, cohabitating partner or former-cohabitating partner, persons related to direct blood line or close family relatives of the spouse). Committing an offence based upon gender is an aggravating circumstance thus, the punishment is increased. Amendments were made regarding systematic psychological and economic abuse. Furthermore other provisions to relieve victims of domestic violence from the obligation to initiate prosecution are adopted. The Penal Code provides for coerced sexual relations without consent between spouses (marital rape) or cohabitating partners and stipulates more severe punishments for the perpetrators.

54. The law "On Social Assistance and Services" provides for the right to withdraw the economic assistance not only from the head of the family but even from women subjected to violence, if they have protection orders. Law "On Social Housing Programs for Urban Areas Residents" (amended in 2012) provides for benefits from social programs to shelter victims of domestic violence, including inflicted women.

55. Amendments to the law "On Legal Aid" have added to the categories of people who receive legal aid: 1) persons under social protection programs or when meeting fulfilling conditions; or 2) persons, victims of domestic violence or victims of trafficking in human beings for judiciary issues related to the above.

56. The law "On Registration of Immovable Properties" (adopted in 2012), provides for the right of women to register immovable properties and the indispensable consent of unregistered female spouse during the selling procedures in front of a notary. For property acquired during marriage the registration in the relevant sector of the property register is done under the co-ownership of both spouses.

57. Moreover the legal and normative framework has been improved, as follows:

- The Coordinating Referral Mechanism for cases of violence in family relations aims to legally protect family members, who are victims of domestic violence and to strengthen the role of the local government. The procedures for multi-disciplinary interventions to assist domestic violence victims are also defined. The mechanism is set up in a number of municipalities of the country, and victims are provided with

legal aid, counseling and psychological assistance and professional training, employment, shelter and food assistance. Some municipalities provide free hotlines to denounce cases of violence. There is a free 24-hour- hotline at each Regional Police Directorate to denounce inter alia cases of domestic violence.

- In 2011, standards of social care services for victims of domestic violence in public and non-public residential center were adopted.
- In 2012 "the necessary criteria and documentation for accepting people in public and non-public social care residential institutions" were adopted to include victims of domestic violence.
- Since 2013, central institutions are planning in their budgeting program measurable objectives for gender equality.
- National Center for Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence provides support to victims of domestic violence; rehabilitation of women, girls and children subject of domestic violence; provides social assistance and qualitative, sustainable services with contemporary standards to the victims of domestic violence and it strengthens the capacities of professional staff.

58. The drafting of the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Elimination of Domestic Violence (NSGEEDV) 2007-2010 marked a positive development in the commitment of the Albanian government. The application of the measures of this Strategy enabled gender issues to be introduced at all levels.

59. 2007-2010 Strategy was reviewed with the aim of determining the priority areas and measures in fulfilling the developments and needs in the field of gender equality and domestic violence. In 2011 were approved the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Reduction of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence 2011-2015 and its Action Plan. The reviewed Strategy was designed on the analysis and treatment of gender equality issues and the reduction of gender based violence. The drafting of the Strategy was supported by *ONE UN* Programme "On gender equality in Albania".

60. The priorities of the Strategy include: 1) Strengthening the Institutional and Legal Mechanism; 2) Increasing Participation of Women in Decision-making; 3) Economic Empowerment of Girls and Women; 4) Reduction of Gender Based Violence. The strategy (2011–2015) together with its Action Plan aim at determining objectives and tangible measures for the protection and promotion of gender equality, promotion of women rights with specific focus on children and women.

61. Specific measurable and monitorable objectives are defined in the Action Plan 2011-2015, as well as activities to accomplish priority strategic goals during its application. The financial costs and funding resources have also been determined, which come mainly from the state budget, budget of local government units and funds provided by different donors.

62. Since 2011, structures of State Police have been applying the Action Plan on strengthening the role of these structures on preventing, treating, providing immediate assistance conform to the legal framework; cooperating with the responsible structures for preventing, reducing domestic violence and protecting its victims. Raising the awareness of law enforcement officials through different activities and training them on these issues.

63. As far as the health sector is concerned, issues of violence in family relations are part of the Basic Package of Primary Health Care Services and part of the National Family Planning Protocol. The unified document for health institutions on identifying, diagnosing and treating cases of violence is also prepared.

64. With regard to data collection, in 2010, gender equality and domestic violence assessment and monitoring indicators were determined, to supervise, collect and process

these data and the obligation of responsible institutions to report data on gender indicators and domestic violence. In the context of the National Referral Mechanism of Cases of Domestic Violence, an electronic system of data collection for the management of domestic violence cases is set up in some municipalities, with the support of the Austrian Government Project "Equality in Governance". Special registries were created to record domestic violence cases managed by the Regional Police Directorate and Commissariat, and the statistical forms to record cases of domestic violence.

Participation of women in public issues and labour market (Recommendations 41, 53)

65. The Electoral Code provides that 30 % of the multi nominal list in each electoral zone must belong to each gender and it also lays down sanctions for political subjects failing to fulfill the gender quota with the aim of increasing the participation of women and girls in public life.

66. For the first time, in the newly established government (2013), women hold 6 positions (31%) of the Government cabinet, 7 positions as deputy ministers, while in Parliament women hold 28 positions (20%).

67. Furthermore, women are also elected at the local government level as majors, head of communes, head of regions, members of municipality councils and appointed in crucial positions as prefects.

68. The number of women in public administration and judiciary has increased at all levels too.

69. Economic empowerment of women and girls remains one of the long-term government priorities and one of the priorities of the Gender Equality National Strategy and Reduction of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy 2011-2015.

70. State policies are focused on supporting the empowerment of rural women and Rural Development Strategy is oriented to create employment opportunities in rural areas.

Registration of children, including marginalized groups (Recommendations 12, 71, 72, 73)

71. The law "On Civil Status" (2009) provides administrative solutions to cases of born and unregistered children and avoids new cases of non-registration. A financial contribution, is granted to parents, to encourage the children registration.

72. In 2011, a cooperation memorandum was signed with NGO-s to facilitate registration procedures of births taking place abroad, through the consular services. The Ministry of Health has approved the new template of birth certificate in maternities.

73. In 2012, have been adopted procedures for registering abandoned and unregistered children by in by representatives of state police and municipalities/municipality units/communes, structures.

74. During 2010-2011, there have been registered 550 cases, 270 children were registered in 2012, 40% of whom belongs to Roma community and 70 cases are in process.

75. Regarding the cases of declared births in Roma community, the relevant structures have cooperated with NGOs, which cover the financial costs to provide documents or to attend a judicial process.

Combating trafficking in human beings, including trafficking of girls and women (Recommendations 31, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65)

76. According to the law "On Social Assistance and Services" victims of trafficking are provided with social services during their accommodation in reception and reintegration centers. They also benefit economic assistance once they come out of the residential centers until the moment of their employment. The funding of non-public residential Centers of victims of trafficking is done by transferring central budget funds to local government bodies and from them to these Centers.

77. With the recent amendments to the Penal Code, the issue of internal trafficking was solved and clarified and some provisions were added concerning non-discrimination of victims of trafficking, sentencing persons benefiting from services of victims of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution.

78. "The National Action Plan on the Combat against Trafficking in Human Beings" and "The Action Plan on the Combat against Trafficking of Children and Protection of Children, Victims of Trafficking" adopted in 2011, constitute an important development in the context of strategic planning to address issues of combat against trafficking in human beings.

79. Legal framework/by-laws:

- Criteria, procedures and measures of economic assistance are defined for Victims of Trafficking when coming out of care Facilities.
- Instruction on application of standards of social care services for individuals trafficked or at risk of being trafficked.
- Provision "On the Treatment of Victims of Trafficking and their Health Services Benefits".
- Standard Action Procedures (SAP) for the Identification and Referral of Victims/Potential Victims of Trafficking (VT/PVT).
- The New Cooperation Agreement on the Functioning of the National Referral Mechanism of Victims/Potential Victims of Trafficking (2012).
- Provisions "On the Treatment of Victims of Trafficking and their Health Services Benefits".
- Order of General Director of State Police "On the coordination of the work between central and local structures for combating trafficking in human beings and identification of victims of trafficking".

80. The activity of the main structures at the national and regional level related to trafficking in human being is strengthened. To mention here: the Responsible Authority for the protection and assistance of victims of trafficking, Anti-Trafficking Unit, Sector against Illegal Trafficking in the General Directorate of State Police operating in any Police Directorate of the country, Section for the Investigation of Issues related to Trafficking in Human Beings at Serious Crime Prosecution Office.

81. The involvement of social workers in the Regional Social Services Offices and of the anti-trafficking police officers has contributed for the strengthening and sustainability of the functional network for cases of trafficking, reduction of the number of victims of trafficking.

82. National Reception Center of Victims of Trafficking hosts, accommodates, rehabilitates, provides medical assistance, refers for integration and returning to the their

country of origin: Albanian girls and women trafficked or at risk of being trafficked; foreign girls and women trafficked or at risk of being trafficked; children victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors or at risk of being trafficked.

83. Further, partnership with the civil society has strengthened in order to consolidate the establishment of sustainable cooperation mechanisms and to prevent and address issues of trafficking. With regard to these issues awareness raising campaigns are conducted.

Protection of the rights of the child (Recommendations 12, 16, 17, 24, 29, 30, 31, 55, 58, 66, 69)

Legal and normative framework

84. Law "On the Protection of the Rights of the Child" aims at improving the system of child protection and provides for measures guaranteeing the life, upbringing and development of the child through the coordination of all actors. This law defines the monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of law, responsibilities of central and local government, the setting up of responsible institutions and administrative sanctions for cases of violation of child rights. Further, it provides for the protection of children from trafficking and from any form of exploitation and sexual ill treatment.

85. The Criminal Code provision on the offence of pornography is amended by adding new elements and making the punishment more severe. Regarding the offence of "trafficking in human beings" two provisions are added "Profiting or using services provided by trafficked persons" "Actions that facilitate trafficking" where more severe punishments are envisaged if these offences are committed against children.

86. Law "On Pre-University Education System" provides for the protection of child rights; the right to the qualitative education and equal opportunities; provides protection from discrimination, violence, maltreatment; special treatment is provided to students of families in need and students with disabilities. The principle of all-inclusiveness is applied in educational institutions.

87. Law "On Social Assistance and Services" provides for economic assistance and social care even for children without parental care, services of social care; their functioning and funding; categories of beneficiaries; services to be provided to children in residential institutions. The novelty brought through this law is the possibility of creating the service of custody.

88. During 2012, by-law acts were adopted for: the establishment and functioning of the coordinating mechanism for the referral of cases of children at risk, structures part of the mechanism, tangible tasks, intervention procedures assisting children at risk; coordination of mechanisms at the central and local level; rules related to cooperation between institutional mechanisms and NGOs to apply local policies for the protection of child rights; review procedures and procedures for imposing sanctions by the State Agency for the Protection of Child Rights (SAPCHR). Statistical data are gathered by SAPCHR and by Child Rights Units in regions (qark). The Joint Order between the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and the Ministry of Interior "On the Protection of the rights of children exposed to different forms of abuse" strengthens cooperation between the responsible structures. The criteria for accepting persons in public and non-public residential social care institutions are defined. Children from the age of 6-16 are accommodated at children's home for school age (orphanage); Orphan children stay at these institutions until the age of 18[4].

Policies

89. The Social Protection Cross Cutting Strategy laid down the objectives of decentralizing and deinstitutionalizing social care services for children. Reforming social services in social care facilities during the process of deinstitutionalization includes three alternatives: returning institutionalized children to their biological families (or to guardians, relatives); domestic and international adoption; placing children under temporary custody. Policies on protection of child rights occupied an important place in the National Strategy of Development and Integration 2007-2013[5].

90. The Action Plan on Children 2012-2015 aims at strengthening the functioning of institutional mechanisms in application of the law and promoting the local government to draft comprehensive policies for children. The Plan defines concrete measures and activities related to application of policies and objectives for the welfare of the child; policies for the prevention and protection from violence and exploitation; policies to ensure a comprehensive educational system; health care; policies in the field of juvenile justice. In some regions of the country the inter-institutional cooperation at central and local level is translated into strategy and action plans to guarantee the promotion and protection of child rights.

Institutions and mechanisms

91. Institutional mechanisms for the protection of child rights are: at central level: National Council for the Protection of Child Rights; State Agency for the Protection of Child Rights. At the local level: Child Rights Unit at regional level; Child Protection Unit at municipality/commune level.

92. Social State Service aims at providing assistance and care, along with other categories, even to orphan and abandoned children as well as to children victims of trafficking. The network of social care institutions for children includes children's homes (according to age groups) and the reception center for victims of trafficking where children are treated.

93. The law "On the Protection of the Rights of the Child" provides for alternative care for children at risk of losing parental care: 1. children temporarily or permanently deprived of their family environment or in whose own best interests cannot remain in that environment; 2. alternative care may include placing children in foster families; placing them in an alternative family or in a care institution for children. The alternative solution is made in compliance to: a) the process of continuous education; b) the level of physical and mental abilities of the child; c) character and personality traits of the child related to his/her ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic origin.

94. Promoting custodial service as a new alternative of family services is based on the process of decentralization and deinstitutionalization and of setting up new community services, where the child is supported and assisted in a family environment. The state provides financial support for a child placed in a custodial family to cover expenses of food, clothing, education and other indirect expenses and a greater support is provided when a child is with disabilities.

95. In relation to child labor, the law "On the Protection of the Rights of the Child" provides for protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, such as forced labor and employment of children under 16 is prohibited.

Children 14-18 years old may perform easy tasks, which do not harm their health and development. Administrative sanctions are foreseen in case of law infringement.

96. Legal framework "On Occupational Health and Safety" guarantees the protection of vulnerable groups from risk, including minors. It also provides that the employer takes specific measures to adapt the working place for this category of minor employees in order to prevent risks related to work conditions.

97. The State Labor and Social Services Inspectorate have constantly exercised inspections and controls at working places even concerning child labor. Inspections are carried out both in the public and private sector and in the sectors most likely to illegally employment of children, particularly in suburbs. Measures have been taken for the formalization of children employment for inevitable cases when they have to work. Activities have been organized to promote cooperation and raise the awareness to denounce cases of illegal work or cases of child rights violation, especially when they work informally.

98. The initiative "No child in the street" aims to undertake short-term and long-terms cross-cutting coordinated actions to protect the best interest of the child, particularly for children in the streets (these children are often subject to abuses, exploitation, begging, violence, forced labor etc.).

99. In relation to juvenile justice, the Code of Criminal Procedure clearly provides for procedural guarantees for all children subject of criminal proceedings. Penal Code defines the basic criteria when criminal responsibility starts in children, the special measures and punishments rendered to children, making a clear division from those rendered to adults. The law "On Legal Aid" provides for the provision of legal aid even for minors.

100. In all cases of escort or detention/arrest in police stations, children stay in separate environments, separately from adults. Registration of escorted/detained children is duly done and there are not any identified cases of violation or shortcoming. The juvenile is always interviewed in the presence of a psychologist, parent or his guardian, specifically including the solicitor according to the legal provisions of protection.

101. Juveniles in pre-trial detention centers and in detention centers are treated by specialized staff of social care services. Assistance is provided for procedural issues of reception and accommodation in accordance to their age, mental and physiological health, as well as psychological-social counseling, educational assistance and family contacts are guaranteed.

102. During this period, a special institution for the treatment of minors serving prison sentences is set up and functioning with the financial support of EU CARDS Program.

103. Institution of Probation supervises the execution of alternative sentences by sentenced minors and works closely with the civil society to guarantee the rights of minors.

Justice and penitentiary system reform (Recommendation 67, 68)

104. Cross Cutting Justice Strategy and its Action Plan (adopted in 2011) aims at improving the justice system, guaranteeing human rights and freedoms; increasing access to justice and enhancing public trust. Its strategic objectives and tangible measures involve: consolidation of autonomy of judicial power and other bodies of justice system; consolidation of rule of law based on human rights and fundamental freedoms by improving the execution of judicial decisions; guaranteeing human rights, the rights of persons in detention and penitentiary, as well as the child rights.

105. Constitutional amendments related to restriction of immunity of deputies, judges and high officials while exercising their functions, allow justice authorities to exercise their functions against these officials. Amendments to the law "On the Organization of Judicial Power" aim to increase the judiciary system efficiency, enhance system transparency and

reduce corruption in the judiciary. Another important development was the adoption of the law "On Administrative Courts" that will increase increasing the administrative judicial process efficacy.

106. Legal, administrative and infrastructural measures have been taken to increase judiciary efficiency, accountability, combat against corruption in the justice system and to improve services provided to citizens with the aim of enhancing human rights protection.

Protection from torture and ill treatment (Recommendations 45, 46, 47, 48)

107. Criminal Code provides for numerous provisions on the unlawful deprivation of liberty, kidnapping, holding a person hostage, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Legal and normative framework on the rights and treatments of persons serving prison sentences or in pre-trial detention guarantees the rights of persons sentenced and in pre-trial detention for human treatment without discrimination. They serve the sentences in officially designated and recognized places. The structures of penitentiary system supervise the respect of the rights of persons serving a sentence. Likewise, detainees are guaranteed to receive information, to be registered in penitentiary institutions and to be fairly treated including the protection of their personal data. The access of competent authorities to penitentiary facilities is guaranteed in order to supervise that their rights are respected along with the access of other institutions such as the Prosecution Office or National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture by the Ombudsman.

108. "The manual about the safety rules and treatment of persons arrested/detained at security rooms at police stations" drafted with the assistance of PAMECA III Mission is applied to respect the rights of persons arrested/detained. Procedures and rules are defined as to the treatment and safety of arrested/detained persons, obligations of police to respect and guarantee their rights, standards of premises and security rooms conform to the Convention against Torture.

109. In application of the Ombudsman recommendations, the new registry for recording escorted persons is formatted. Furthermore, the registry for the identification, treatment and solving the complaints/requests of those persons deprived of their liberty at the premises of State Police is adopted together with the standard working procedures.

110. To ensure the safety and human treatment of arrested, detained and escorted persons, measures have been taken to upgrade the conditions of escort, detention and arrest premises at Police Commissariats. Thus, surveillance cameras have been installed in the escort and security premises and in other the service is being improved.

111. General Directorate of Prisons (GDP) is the responsible authority for controlling the execution of prison sentences according to the international standards and legal framework. This directorate has carried out numerous inspections at Penitentiary Institutions, expanding the scope of their inspections and based on the Ombudsman recommendations and other monitoring international organizations and civil society. GDP has drafted guidelines enabling convicted persons to denounce criminal cases and the obligation of the penitentiary system staff to denounce these cases. In the event of ill treatment, disciplinary and administrative sanctions are applied to the staff. A series of cooperation agreements with NGOs are signed with the aim of inspecting the pre-trial detention and prisons.

112. State Police Structures have investigated and prosecuted the identified cases when a law enforcement official has violated human rights and fundamental freedoms in all cases.

113. The Institution of Prosecution Office on the basis of denouncements or complaints or with its initiative has initiated criminal proceedings for cases of ill treatment or other violent offences against persons escorted, arrested, detained, remanded or convicted.

Improving the conditions of pre-trial detainees and convicted persons (Recommendation 49, 52)

114. Since 2012, the pre-trial detention institution has been functioning in Elbasan, which influenced the improvement of standards and conditions of the system in general. The adoption of law "On Amnesty" reduced overcrowded prisons for persons with limited freedom and serving partially or fully the sentence[6]. The opening of two new institutions during these years has been planned, with the financial funding of EU and it will improve the standards and reduce overcrowding in Penitentiary Institutions.

115. The Probation Service has been functioning since 2009, supervising and supporting the execution of alternative sentences, assisting convicted persons to meet their obligations deriving from alternative sentence and to overcome obstacles for their social reintegration.

Awareness raising campaigns for the implementation of the legal framework on human rights (Recommendations 21, 22)

116. During this period, awareness raising campaigns were conducted to elimination gender stereotypes, to increase the political and public decision making of women and her economic empowerment; national conferences, meetings, programs with the electronic media, fairs with works of girls and women were organized; awareness raising materials are developed; posters, TV spots etc. An increased awareness by both state structures and society about gender issues is observed.

117. Activities organized to prevent trafficking aim to raise the awareness of the public and groups most at risk, such as children, youth, marginalized groups etc. Manuals, leaflets and brochures are published and distributed to prevent trafficking. TV spots, documentaries, TV and radio programmes are broadcasted. Seminars with the electronic media are organized and written regarding issues of trafficking in human beings. Topics related to trafficking in human being, issues about child protection, child rights, gender equality, domestic violence and sexual education are part of the curricula to raise the awareness of children and youth.

Education and training (Recommendations 15, 19, 22, 23, 26, 29, 32, 58)

118. In the context of implementing the recommendations and obligations deriving from the Convention against Torture or other Forms of Cruel Treatment, the Trauma Center (NGO) in cooperation with the General Directorate of Prisons has conducted trainings with the staff of prisons police to prevent potential cases of maltreatment within the penitentiary system.

119. During 2010, the educational syllabus and its respective training curricula "On recognition and respect of the rights of persons deprived of their liberty at State Police premises" was elaborated followed with trainings in local police structures. In the context of institutional strengthening, Regional Police Directorates have conducted trainings on issues of gender equality and domestic violence concerning protection, treatment and management of cases of domestic violence at the local level.

120. State Agency for the Protection of Child Rights in cooperation with UNICEF has organized trainings in 12 regions of the country to raise the awareness of local stakeholders and to inform them of the new national policies for the realization of child rights.

121. Ministry of Education and Sports has allocated a special budget to organize trainings with teachers, psychologists and school directors working with children of Roma and Egyptian community as well as trainings with parents of Roma children, with the focus on "assistance to teach Albanian language".

122. Every year the School of Magistrate in cooperation with the civil society organizes for Police Structures, Prosecution Office and Courts numerous trainings related to the phenomenon of trafficking, getting to know the legal framework, understanding the phenomenon, its forms, consequences and mechanisms of actions to investigate cases of trafficking as well as in relation to aspects of prevention and protection of victims of trafficking.

National Strategy and measures to improve the living conditions and education of Roma (Recommendations 80, 81, 84)

123. The Albanian Government is committed to implementing the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion in order to improve the living standards of Roma community. An effective mechanism is set up to monitor and evaluate the progress at the national level of the National Strategy on Roma and the National Action Plan "Decade of Roma Inclusion" as well as the cooperation among institutions at the central and local level.

124. To this end measures are taken in the field of education, health, social protection and to increase access to social benefits, to apply special employment promotion programs for Roma community particularly for Roma women; for professional training; to set up community services for Roma children; to integrate Roma children in the street; to prevent and combat trafficking; to protect from violence; to inform families of benefiting from social protection system; economic assistance program; social care services etc.

125. Families of Roma community have priority to benefit from the social housing rental programs and low cost housing program (facilitated loan) and other small grants or funds from the state budget.

126. Tangible measures regarding education are envisaged in the Action Plan of Roma Decade: providing and promoting education in schools under pilot programs; applying the Instruction on reduction of school drop-outs to zero and the Instruction on creating opportunities to attend full time or part time the general high school or vocational training education. The plan for distributing scholarships within the approved quota is adopted, where the municipalities and communes to give priority to Roma pupils and students are recommended.

127. During this period, it was worked on the organization and functioning of courses against illiteracy in schools, attracting Roma children in pre-school classes, teaching different subjects during free classes, attending full time or part time general high school and vocational education. Since the academic year of 2011-2012, all Roma children in compulsory education get their text books for free. 20 special quotas are provided for certain cycles of public higher education in order to institutionalize supporting policies for this community in the higher public education and for the integration of these persons. This positive discrimination policy allows the inclusion of candidates from this community. Moreover, based on the relevant normative framework the candidates of this community are exempted from or pay reduced tuition fees.

128. Concerning health sector, immunization campaigns have been undertaken for Roma children, and periodical controls to monitor the situation and controlling the drinking water. Roma minority is included in primary health basic services including here the benefits from the system of referral to more specialized services.

129. As concerning employment, professional training and social protection, certain initiatives are undertaken to draft promotion and facilitation policies for Roma community with the aim of promoting their employment, qualification and training and their integration in the labor market. Unemployed Roma do not pay the registration fee to attend professional training courses provided by the Regional Directorate of Public Professional Training. Amendments to the law "On Social Assistance and Services" in 2011, provided that families of Roma community similar to families in need are exempted from the income estimate in order to be entitled to economic assistance.

130. Recently there has been an increase in the representation of this community in services provided by the Social Care Institution. In 2013 there has been an increase in the number of beneficiaries of economic assistance and social services provision from this category of the population.

Fight against corruption (Recommendations 27, 28)

131. An important development was the voting in the Assembly for the removal of immunity for high state officials (2012). This amendment will better guarantee the process of equality before the law for all citizens and will significantly improve joint efforts for combating corruption. The Penal Code provides for the offences of passive corruptive actions of persons exercising official functions and high state officials or locally elected representatives.

132. Ministry of Justice has prepared a legal package regarding some amendments to the Civil Code which provides for the addition of a separate chapter "Liability of Corruptive Actions". There are five new provisions which sanction corruptive actions of persons who deform the performance of any task or behavior by asking, offering, giving/accepting directly/indirectly bribes or any other advantage. The Minister of Justice has recently asked assistance to the Venice Commission on legal and judicial reform.

133. Moreover, the Cross Cutting Strategy "On Prevention and Fight against Corruption and Transparent Governance (2008–2013)" is adopted. The priority and the general objective of this strategy is combating and progressively reducing corruption through: (a) reforms for its prevention; (b) strengthening the integrity of institutions and promotion of governance values; (c) comprehensive monitoring of corruption phenomenon, involvement of civil society and strengthening its role on combating this phenomenon; (d) administrative and legal punishment of corrupted officials. This strategy is based on a comprehensive integrated approach for combating corruption and following the best international, regional and domestic standards and practices in this area.

134. In this context significant improvements were made and the recommendations under the third GRECO evaluation are fulfilled. The government of Albania had expressed its commitment to proactively implement the anti-corruption strategy as part of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI). CoE PACA program has provided recommendations for setting up mechanisms to increase integrity and regulate conflicts of interest with regard to the administration of staff even in the education system. Furthermore the Albanian authorities are taking into consideration the Advisory Paper of CoE on short- and middle term measures on anti-corruption.

135. Since 2013, a portal is opened in the website of the Ministry of Justice to denounce cases of corruption, treated with priority by the responsible structures.

136. Regarding the institutional framework for combating corruption, the National Coordinator against Corruption of Civil Servants is established, a task designated to the Minister of State on Local Issues. This structure undertakes legal and institutional initiatives, coordinates, monitors and reports on the application of state policies against corruption. Joint Investigative Units, at the structures of Judicial District Prosecution Office, aim at increasing the quality of investigation and prosecution of offences in the area of economic crime and corruption, as well as pressing charges and sending offenders to court.

137. The Ombudsman Office has signed a series of agreements/memorandums with national and international institutions to strengthen the rule of law, combat against corruption, economic crime and conflict of interests.

Measures for service provision to people with disabilities, in different areas, reliable statistical data (Recommendation 20)

138. The rights of Persons with Disabilities (PD) are guaranteed by the Constitution of Albania and by the existing legal framework. Law "On Social Assistance and Care" provides for services for this category, including financial assistance, treatment in public and private care facilities. The legislation in the field of education guarantees the right to education and creates opportunities according to their needs. Law "On Mental Health" addresses the right of persons with mental disabilities.

139. The Labor Code prohibits any form of discrimination in employment and professional training of this category. They are entitled to work in appropriate working places conform to the observations of the Medical Assessment Commission.

140. Law "On Promotion of Employment" provides support for employment, consultation and qualification of persons with disabilities, *inter alia*; it provides that one of 25 employees should be a person with disabilities. In this case the employer of a disabled person can claim subsidy from the Employment Office. The salary of this persons is exempted from taxation.

141. Law "On Protection from Discrimination" is also a positive step toward their protection. Law "On Legal Aid" provides free legal aid to different categories, including persons with disabilities, in civil, criminal and administrative proceedings.

142. Social protection measures include: raising their salaries, payments for their caretakers, extending the social service network, their integration into daily life, providing a favorable environment for their support etc. Residential social services for people with disabilities in Albania are provided in 6 centers, located in 6 cities.

143. A number of strategic documents address issues related to persons with disabilities, such as: National Strategy for Development and Integration (2007–2013), National Strategy on Persons with Disabilities (2006–2015), Cross Cutting Strategy on Social Inclusion (2007–2013), Strategy on Social Protection (2007–2013), Strategy on Employment and Professional Training, National Strategy on Education, Strategic Plan 2012-2015 of the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination.

144. In 2013, is being drafted a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Convention. Regarding statistical data, there are about 120 thousands persons with disabilities, consisting 4.2% of the population.

Measures for consolidating the right to property (Recommendation 70)

145. Law "On the Registration of Immovable Properties" was adopted in 2012 with the aim of guaranteeing the right to property.

146. The Cross Cutting Strategy "Reforms on the Field of Property Rights 2012-2020", is based on the political will to fulfill the existing international standards and to balance the interests and needs of different stakeholders in society. The Strategy principles are related to public interest, fair compensation, principle of justice, proportionality and social state, with the principle of legal assurance and clarification of legislation as fundamental conditions to strengthen the fundamental rights in line with the country development and attracting foreign investments.

Blood feud (Recommendation 57)

147. Due to the high social risk that the offence of blood feud bears, the recent amendments to the Penal Code in 2013 provided for an increase in the sentence for this offence.

148. The State Police has undertaken the necessary steps, outlined in periodically drafted plans on detailed measures, to prevent the phenomenon of blood feud. Children are the most affected category from the phenomenon of blood feud. In this direction, the responsible state institutions in cooperation with the actors of civil society have undertaken the necessary steps to identify children in isolation, who are outside of the educational system and to coordinate services to guarantee their denied rights, so that the phenomenon is reduced.

149. Moreover, the National Reconciliation Committee organizes the reconciliation process in all districts of the country through yearly expeditions, in order to develop dialogue among families in blood feud and prevent murders.

Minorities rights (Recommendations 83, 85)

150. The Constitution and the legal framework guarantees the minorities rights without discrimination of national and ethno-linguistic minorities. The relevant institutions are committed to draft and implement a road map to improve legislative and policy framework as regards respect for and protection of minorities.

Freedom of expression and press (Recommendation 75)

151. Albanian Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the prior censorship of the media is prohibited. The need to amend the legislation in the field of broadcasting came as a result of the development of electronic media services. The Law "For audio-visual media" (adopted in 2013) regulate broadcasting activity, in compliance with the recommendations of the CoE, as well as the *acquis communitaire* and provides improvements in the field of electronic media broadcast.

Invitations for special procedures (33–37)

152. Following the permanent invitation of 2009, in the context of Special Procedures Mechanism, Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial executions, Mr. Philip Alston and Special Rapporteur on the human rights migrants, Mr. Jorge Bustamente, visited Albania. Upon

completion of their missions, both Rapporteurs congratulated the Albanian authorities on the excellent cooperation provided to them during the visit. Their recommendations have become an integral part of our institutions daily work with the aim of improving the standards of respecting human rights.

V. Priorities of the Republic of Albania in the field of promotion and protection of human rights

153. The priorities in the field of promotion and protection of human rights are:

- To continue with the harmonization of national regulations with international obligations in the field of human rights protection;
- To strengthen the role of national human rights protection mechanisms;
- Reform in justice system and fight against corruption;
- Improvement of legal framework in the field of human rights particularly in the areas of children, women, persons with disabilities and minorities rights.
- Implementation of Roma Strategy and Action Plan for the Implementation of Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.
- To strengthen the cooperation with Human Rights Bodies, to recognize their competence to receive and consider individual communication. To continue co-operating with the UN special procedures and holding the standing invitation for the thematic procedures mandate holders.
- To improve co-operation with the civil society in the promotion and the implementation of programmes for the protection of human rights.

Notes

[1] Commission on Legal Issues, Public Administration and Human Rights; Commission on Foreign Policy, Commission on Labor, Social and Health Issues; Commission on Education and Public Information Media.

[2] Bearing in mind the large number of recommendations the information is structured based on thematic fields.

[3] ECRI conclusions on Albania, December 2012: http:/www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Albania/ALB-IFU-IV-2013-003-ENG.pdf

[4] Children from the age of 0-6 are accommodated at children's home (orphanage).

[5] The Government program envisages the drafting of the new Strategy on Development and Integration 2014-2020 and other cross cutting strategies.

[6] As a result, prison overcrowding was reduced from 7.7% in 2011, to 1.6% in the end of 2012.